

VZCZCXRO1161
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLP #2111/01 2161857
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041857Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0148
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6027
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3346
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7196
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4459
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1734
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1749
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3945
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4365
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8929
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 002111

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR A/S T.SHANNON AND PDAS C.SHAPIRO
STATE ALSO FOR WHA/AND P.FRENCH AND L.PETRONI
MCC FOR A.KIRSCHENBAUM
NSC FOR D.FISK
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2016

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)

SUBJECT: MORALES' RHETORIC LEADS TO INCREASED CRITICISM

REF: A. LA PAZ 1337

[1](#)B. LA PAZ 1517

Classified By: Amb. David N. Greenlee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: President Morales launched his "agrarian revolution" August 2 in Ucurena, Cochabamba, declaring that if Congress does not approve the executive's land reform bill, indigenous communities will close Congress for its "ineffectiveness." Opposition parties from eastern Bolivia claim that Morales made the announcement in a town which symbolizes east-west conflict in order to provoke the east, and have criticized Morales' hard line approach. While Morales might have sufficient indigenous support on land reform issues to pressure Congress, other indigenous groups are beginning to dampen their enthusiasm for the MAS. These conflicts, along with recent clashes with the prefects, the church, and intra-party squabbles over organization of the Constituent Assembly, are creating significant pressure for Morales, who is beginning to show signs of stress. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) President Morales launched his "agrarian revolution" August 2 in the department of Cochabamba, declaring that if Congress does not pass the executive's land reform bill, indigenous communities will close Congress for its "ineffectiveness." (Note: As reported in reftels, Morales' land reform involves the redistribution of government-owned lands and privately-owned "unproductive" large landholdings. The proposed reforms are extremely unpopular in eastern Bolivia, where the bulk of the land would be redistributed. End note.)

[1](#)3. (C) Opposition parties from eastern Bolivia claim that Morales made his August 2 announcement in a town which symbolizes east-west conflict in order to provoke the east. (Note: In the 1950's, western Bolivians organized in Ucurena for an attack on Santa Cruz, ultimately killing many men,

women and children of that department. End note). According to a Santa Cruz journalist, Morales' frustration with the east is increasing. In a recent interview, the president displayed overt hostility towards Santa Cruz. Morales asked his personal secretary why he had granted a Santa Cruz journalist an interview, refused to answer any questions about the department, and after ten minutes, stormed out.

¶4. (C) In response to Morales' threat to close Congress, the opposition criticized his hard line approach, publicly blasting him for relying on force instead of consensus and for his lack of respect for democracy. On August 3, the opposition said if Morales closes Congress, his own resignation should follow. An opposition senator told the Ambassador August 3 that Morales and the MAS congressional leadership have been increasingly resorting to threats to close the Congress to achieve the results they want. Separately, two members of Congress told poloff August 4 that Morales' Ucurena attack is "typical," and that GOB officials are already trying to soften the negative public impact by charging the press with misquoting him. They also said the executive's land reform bill will not pass Congress without significant changes based on consensus.

¶5. (C) While Morales might have sufficient indigenous support on land reform to pressure Congress, other indigenous groups are beginning to show less enthusiasm for the MAS. Several indigenous organizations have complained to poloff that Morales has excluded them from the MAS project. One analyst said several indigenous organizations are collaborating on their own draft constitution, which they plan to use to challenge the MAS' draft later this year.

LA PAZ 00002111 002 OF 002

¶6. (C) Comment: These conflicts, along with recent clashes with the prefects, the church, and intra-party squabbles over organization of the Constituent Assembly, are creating mounting pressure for Morales, who is beginning to show signs of stress. We nonetheless have yet to see any concerted or significant opposition response to what may be emerging as vulnerabilities that could be exploited to political advantage. For now, the only real opposition to Morales is that which he generates himself. End comment.
GREENLEE